

*A joyous and peaceable State of
Mind, the happy Fruit and Ef-
fect of Afflictions.*

I N A
S E R M O N

Preach'd on the sad Occasion of the
Death of Her late

Majesty Queen *ANNE*,
of Blessed Memory,

In the Parish Church of St. *Clement Danes*,
August the 8th, 1714.

By *W. FORSTER*, Rector of St. *Clement Danes*,
and Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl
of *Exeter*.

*Published at the Request of several Gentlemen of the
Vestry and others.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for *D. Browne* at *Exeter Exchange*, *W. Mear*
without *Temple-Bar*, and are to be sold by *J. Roberts*
in *Warwick Lane*. MDCCXIV.



TO THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

J O H N,

Lord Bishop of *LONDON,*

DEAN of the ROYAL CHAPPEL,

This Discourse is most humbly Inscrib'd by his
Lordship's

most Dutiful, and

most Obedient Servant,

W. Forster.



A
S E R M O N
O N

H E B. xii. 11.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous: nevertheless afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised therewith.

GOOD and Pious Princes being one of the greatest Blessings Heaven can bestow on Mankind; the Loss of 'em is consequently one of the severest Afflictions that can befall a Nation: as the wise and just Providence of God hath in a signal manner convinced a wicked and undeserving People, by depriving us of our late Gracious Sovereign, *the Desire of our Eyes, and the Breath of our Nostrils*; whose Memory will be precious to late Posterity, among all that have any Sense of Piety and Virtue: The Glories of her
short

short Reign will be admired, and scarce believed by future Ages, and her Name stand inrolled in the front of the *greatest* and *best* of Princes.

And now it must be our great Concern, carefully to follow the conduct of Reason, and summon all the Powers of Religion, to carry us rightly thro', and to make the best Improvement of this Affliction; by putting our selves in a Preparation for the like, or other future Occurrences, we may meet with in this World of Conflicts: For the Considerations that will bring Relief to the Wounds made in our Spirits by the late Surprizing Stroke of Death, will also prepare us for our own, or of those beloved Persons in whom we enjoy all the Comforts of Life, and enable us to support the Burden of all other Accidents.

To this end, I propose to shew from the words of the Apostle, " That Afflictions
 " are a most effectual Means to bring Men
 " to a peaceable, joyous state of Mind,
 " which is the fruit of Righteousness, by
 " the exercising our Christian Virtues and
 " Graces.

There is a two-fold Joy, one of the *bodily Life*, which in it self is not to be condemn'd, if joined with Innocency and Purity, being the Dowry which the Soul receives by its Espousal to the Body; the other is a *pure intellectual Joy*, and is the
 Fruit

Fruit of Righteousness, and which no State or Condition can deprive us of. This ought always to be predominant, and set bounds to the other.

Now Afflictions promote this, by exercising and increasing those Christian Graces, from which this heavenly Fruit, this Divine Joy does spring. To make this appear, these three things are to be considered.

I. What are those particular parts of Righteousness, which are most exercis'd and produced in the Mind by Afflictions.

II. What Power and Energy Afflictions have to produce them.

III. How a joyful Temper of Mind does result from them.

I shall not speak to these separately, but treat of them together under these four Heads, and shew, that Afflictions, when they obtain their true Effect, do naturally tend to produce in the Mind,

1. A Mortification and Deadness to the World; with which is conjoin'd,

2. Heavenly Mindedness.

3. Humility, Patience, Resignation to God, and Contentment in every Condition.

4. Faith in God's eternal Power and Goodness.

1. The first Advantage we receive from Afflictions, is Mortification and Deadness to the World, and the things thereof. Man

was

was at first intended for a Life dedicated to the Service and Glory of God: But thro' some fatal Error and Miscarriage, he is fallen from that happy State he was Originally made for; and now, if let alone to himself, he grovells upon the Earth, and never so much as thinks of, never sends up one Glance, one Desire towards that Glory he is sunk and departed from; he becomes quite dead to a Holy and Divine Life, but vigorous to the Things of this World, the Objects of the sensual Life; them he only relishes, the Impressions they make upon his Mind are so strong, that they obliterate all the more refin'd and purer Sensations of it; 'till they bring it first to entertain false Notions, and then an absolute Unbelief of spiritual Things, and immaterial Beings; thinking that they are indeed at most but Shades and phantastick Beings, if compar'd with the Realities of Sense. And here lies the true Foundation of Atheism and Infidelity; Mens *Lusts* and *Sensuality* begin it, carry it on, and hold them Slaves and Captives in it. Their State is just like a Dream, when those real Things that are without, become as nothing to us; and while better Things come not in view to the Mind, no wonder if *sensible Good* carries the Preference, and obtains the choice of the Will, having already prepossess'd and brib'd the *Affections*. Thus Mens
Minds

Minds are drawn unto, and closely united with those several Objects, whereby the bodily Pleasure may be gratify'd and heighten'd ; and while they are in this Fools Paradise, they are full of Self-complacency, gay and flattering Fancies ; taking their conceited Joys to be a real Heaven, and the highest State of Happiness ; and their Prejudices make it impossible to perswade them, that there is any higher Good or Happiness belonging to the Soul of Man, than what large Estates, magnificent Houses, luxurious Tables, splendid Equipages, numerous Attendants, Mirth and Jollity, swelling Titles of Honour, and the continual Court of others, can amount unto. Nor need any one wonder, how the lapsed Mind should sink into this condition, who does but consider its close Conjunction with the Body ; its long converse with the World, before it was able to think of better things ; the bewitching Nature, and strong Insinuations of the Delights of Sense ; the difficulty of attending to things of an abstracted and spiritual Nature ; the numerous Prejudices imbib'd and taken up by Education ; and the bad Examples it continually hath in view. Now God makes use of Afflictions, as the principal Instruments of his Providence to awaken and instruct the rude unthinking Mind of Man, in the true nature of Things,

B

and

and in what most nearly concerns him; which otherwise would make no Impression on him, nor scarce be so much as thought of. For Men cannot easily be brought to believe things that are contrary to their present course of Life, and inconsistent with that State and Sense of Things they feel their present Enjoyments in. Therefore sensual Pleasures make the Mind that lives at ease in them, incapable of perceiving the force of any Truth that is not agreeable to the bodily Life, nor willing to fall under the Conviction of it, 'till Experience teaches them, and the smart of their present Condition obliges them to confess it.

Afflictions therefore are the School of Divine Providence, wherein the ignorant unexperienc'd Soul must learn those sober Truths, which, if left to it self, it will never be able to fix its Thoughts upon. True, he who is under a present Taste of the Pleasures of a Holy Life, his own Mind will furnish and instruct him with right Apprehensions concerning the Vanity of the World; but notwithstanding, while he is in Conjunction with his Body, it will be needful he should be kept in a State of Discipline, and be taught wholesome Truths, and train'd up to sober Counsels, and a right Judgment of Things, by the Rules of Severity and Experience. For it is as dangerous

rous for a Man to be placed in the midst of Temptations, and the Allurements of Sense, without any check upon him, as for the tender Years of a Child to be left without Government, and free from all restraint, to act whatever its own unthinking Humour shall suggest unto it.

But happy! thrice happy he! who is brought up under the wholesome Discipline of God's Rod, and whom Providence by a thorough Experience, instructs to form a right Judgment in all the great Concerns of Life, which afterwards proves infinitely more advantageous to him, than if he had been left to trifle away his time as his vain Imaginations led him.

There is a giddy unthinking Wildness in the Mind, while it is possess'd with sensual Joys; it dreams of nothing but Sunshines; and a thousand airy Notions of fancied Happiness flutter upon the surface of the Soul, and strike the Imagination. But now Afflictions give the Mind the first hint, that the Happiness it has been in pursuit of, is not to be found here. And whereas it had before promised it self a Life of continual Pleasure, now finds the Scene chang'd, and the Pleasures of this World appear with a different Aspect, from what they did in the Season of Prosperity; the *Fucus* is now wip'd off, and the Soul views them, without disguise, in their na-

tural Complexion, and what they really are, unsatisfactory, empty and transient; and thereby teach the Man, that he had all along been impos'd upon with false Images, and that nothing was so groundless and deceitful, as those Flatteries the World had bewitch'd him with. And when the Mind is thus awaken'd, how many good Suggestions spring up in it, partly from the present State the Mind is in, being serious, inquisitive, unprejudiced, and freed from Lightness and Vanity; and partly from the Injections of the Divine Spirit, which, like the Angel, *Job. v. 4.* descends into these troubled Waters, to perfect the Cure of the distemper'd Soul; which being now clear and free, more readily receives the Impressions made on it by Truths of a higher Nature, and greater Importance.

This being seriously consider'd, no greater Advantage can accrue to any Man, than sometimes to fall under Troubles; and he who will value things by the reference they have to the Happiness of the Soul, will see that the Advantage is far the greatest on the side of Afflictions.

The Sum of what has been said is this: There are only three ways to secure us from the Danger of Worldly Temptations.

1. A vigorous Relish of heavenly Joys; which, tho' now and then, is afforded to holy Souls, yet this State of Mortality confines us to such rare, transient and intermitting Enjoyments thereof: And besides, this being the Portion but of a very few Persons; it would not be sufficient to secure us from lapsing from the Divine into a sensual Life.

2. The next is a strong and firm Resolution of making a constant and unwearied Search into the true Nature of Things; which only Men of Attainments, and who have been long exercis'd in Virtue, are able to do: But for the generality, even of good Men, if we consider the weakness of the Principle and Power of Virtue in them, it will appear that the only Security against the Evil of Temptations, is,

3. By imbittering the Delights of this World, and making a sensual Happiness an utter Impossibility. Oh! what great Peace is the Portion of that Mind, which, by being exercis'd with Afflictions, can at last entirely free it self from the Love and Desires of this World. For, from whence spring all our Fears and Jealousies, all our pensive and racking Thoughts, but from our not being mortified to Temporal Enjoyments? Free but the Mind of them, and there will follow that Tranquility,
that

that smooth and chearful Temper of the Soul, which is its true and real Happiness. A sensual Man cannot live, cannot enjoy himself, but by deluding himself with false Hopes and Perswasions; and how unhappy must he be, when Disappointment is the end of his Expectation.

2. A second Fruit and happy Effect of Afflictions, is Heavenly-Mindedness, and bringing back the wandring Soul of Man unto his God; which is a Consequent from the former. When Experience convinces us, that in departing from God, we cannot any where else meet with a State of Happiness suited to our Immortal Spirits, all other Things proving Vexatious to us; this puts us upon enquiring after the Fountain of Goodness, and directs our Choice to that true Object of Happiness, God himself. When the Channel is stopt, that our Affections cannot run with so full a Tide of Joy to these earthly Things, then the Mind applies it self with more ease and freedom to the Thoughts of a future and more happy State.

Is it not a greater Favour, to drive us by pinching Hunger to the Immense Fulness of God, than to fill us with Husks, and let us so continue among Swine like our selves, without any Molestation?

Oh !

Oh! how full of Heaven are the Minds of Saints! how do their Discourses breath nothing but what is Divine, when by Afflictions their Desires are taken off, and set loose from this Earth! where even the Best of Men are apt to dwell but too securely, and not imploy their Thoughts upon God, and a future State, so often and so much, as 'tis their Interest to do. It is therefore the greatest Favour God can do us, to prepare our Minds for Himself and Eternity, by banishing from our Souls all low and sensual Satisfactions, that he may be All in All to us: And this is the proper, the peculiar Work of Troubles and Afflictions. As it is also,

3. In the third Place, to produce in us Humility, Patience, Resignation to God, and a contented Mind in every Condition. As we are Creatures, it is reasonable we should find Satisfaction and Pleasure only in that State, wherein our Passions are subdued, and our Wills are in an absolute Obedience to That of our Creator; which State we are to be brought into, by frequent and repeated Acts of Self-denyal, by crucifying our particular Wills, which are not in Agreement with the Everlasting Righteousness of God. Now the Mind, by being exercised in several States, contracts an Indifferency, and does not mo-
rosek

rosely stick to *This* or *That*, but is prepar-
ed to follow the Will of God with a per-
fect Compliance, whatever way He shall
please to determine; which it is the more
easily enabled to do, because, by being
thus exercised, it has the Experience of
the Good and Advantage of all States, and
sees the Reasons of Divine Providence in
every one of them.

Now from these two, Mortification to
the World, and the Resignation of a Man's
Will to that of his Creator, arises that true
Christian Contentment of Mind, which
no Man can be unhappy, that is possess'd
of.

4. Faith in God's Eternal Power and
Goodness, is also exercis'd and brought forth
by Afflictions; from which arises true For-
titude and Christian Courage; in the
Power of which Divine Faith, the good
Christian is able to encounter all Difficul-
ties and Hardships; so that no Face of
Things can strike him with Horror and
Amazement, or move him from his stead-
fast Resolution; for his Heart is unmove-
ably fix'd upon this Principle, "That
" Divine Goodness doth all things in the
" World, or permits them to be done, for
" wise and excellent Ends. And when
God gives him some very sensible Proofs
of his Infinite Love, how high and ravish-
ing

ing are those Joys, his Mind is then possess'd with ! The Primitive Christians, and especially our Apostle, was a noble Instance hereof, who could Glory and Triumph in the sharpest Conflicts and Tribulations. He was always ready to cry out,
 “ Welcome Storms and Tempests, lowering Heavens, boistrous Winds and swelling Waves. Welcome Sickness, Reproach and Imprisonment, Pain and Torture, Persecution, Flames and Death it self ; in all these things *I am more than Conqueror* ; For I am assured, that neither Height or Depth, neither Principalities nor Powers, neither Things present, nor Things to come, shall be able ever to separate me from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. I know God's Power in me, is stronger than the World, and shall prevail over all these Things, and work out of them the Rewards of Infinite Love ; and that endless Glory and Immortality shall be the result of a persevering Virtue.

Now the Mind being thus exercis'd, and acquiring to it self thereby these noble Dispositions, is placed by them for ever after above the reach of Fate, and where it can trample under its Feet that

C

thing

thing call'd Fortune, the dreaded Deity of low and Superstitious Minds.

My Design is, by this Discourse, to teach us how to behave under Afflictions. And since they are things so very improvable, and to such excellent Purposes, let us not lose the Fruit and Advantage of them by Despondency; by murmuring against the righteous Providence of God; by a Discomposure either in our Thoughts, or in our Duty, or by a fierce ungovernable temper of Mind; but with Patience and Resignation wait for their working the design'd Effect upon us. For which End, let us make use of them as advantageous Means, and happy Opportunities to exercise those several Graces of the Spirit, which may produce in us this joyous and peaceable State of Mind, and which shined with so bright and uncommon a Lustre in the Person of our late most excellent Queen; who suffer'd no Virtue to lie by her idle; but her Practice made them visible and exemplary in every Relation Providence plac'd her in, being one of the best of Women, of Christians, and of Princes.

Her own Sex have lost in her an illustrious Ornament; the Poor and Afflicted a sure Refuge and Relief in their Distress;
and

and all Persons of whatever Rank and Condition, a glorious Example of Piety and Virtue; and the whole Nation a Tender, Just, and Gracious Prince, who (in imitation of her God) was continually shedding abroad the Influence of her Goodness and her Mercy.

Never was that Prophecy, *Isa. xlix. 29.* more exactly accomplish'd than in her, *Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and Queens thy nursing Mothers.* She was a most Tender and Affectionate Mother of Christ's Church, and particularly of the Church of *England*, wherein she had her admission into the Christian Faith by Baptism, and receiv'd her Education; and whereof she was so great an Ornament in her Character, in her Profession, and, what is above all, in her Exemplary Life and Practice.

Her Death seem'd indeed to be sudden, and such a one would, I fear, be so to most of us; but was no Surprize to her, who liv'd, as if, with the Apostle, *she died daily*; of which her *Closet*, her *Table*, her *Diversions*, were constant Witnesses. The glittering of an earthly Crown could not dazle her Eyes from looking up steadfastly, and with earnest

Desire, to that Crown she is gone, Blessed Soul! to be rewarded with

Numerous and Powerful are the Temptations that attend the high Station she moved in, but her heavenly Soul could not be brought into Subjection by them. She saw thro' the Vanity and Uncertainty of all things here below, and therefore placed her Affections *where only true Joys are to be found*. They were not the fleeting Glories of this World, but the substantial Happiness of Heaven she had constantly in view, and pressed forwards to the Enjoyment of.

She hath convinc'd the World, that Religion is practicable in every State and Condition, by her Eminent Example; which having no greater Influence on us, we have Reason to believe, the Almighty was pleas'd to remove her to himself, to punish our Neglect; and that she might the sooner shine forth a glorious Saint in Heaven.

Let her Example, and the Thoughts of these things, awake our drowsie Souls out of the sleep of Sin, and a fatal Security; that we may, before our Sun is set, humble our selves under the mighty Hand of God, and imploring his Mercy and Forgiveness in our Prayers, obtain his Favour
and

and Reconciliation by a sincere Repentance. Should we be surprized, and the mortal Stroke be given us while unprepared, how will it heighten our Torment to reflect, that this Noble Soul, *for the glory that is to be revealed, for the prize of the high calling set before her*, could so easily break through all the alluring Temptations she was surrounded with, and which sollicit and press more violently upon those that move in so high a Sphere. While we, having the *same Hopes*, the *same Prize* to look to, and the *same Reward* to expect; are yet so meanly, so basely held in Slavery by Temptations fewer in number, and less in Power.

Love and Peace enter'd into the very Composition of her Soul, which our wicked *Divisions* and *Party-rage* continually griev'd, and even forced to take its leave of the Body, and fly away to the calm Regions of universal Love in Heaven, there to enjoy an uninterrupted, everlasting Rest, which as this World cannot give, so neither can it take away.

Unanimity and mutual Love were her *living Speeches* to us, and, I question not, but they were her *dying Prayers* for us; for she entirely lov'd our Nation, and
wish'd

with'd its Happiness, which can never be establish'd, while we are thus rent asunder by intestine Divisions.

Let then Her Memory, Her Desires, Her Prayers, let our own Interest, let the prosperous Success of His Present Majesty's Reign (which God grant may be long over us) prevail with us to banish these pernicious and destructive Animosities. And if these Things cannot, yet let that Principle of Honour we so much value our selves upon, perswade us to it; that our Sovereign, when he arrives among us, may find he is come to Govern a Nation of *reasonable Creatures*, and not *Beasts of Prey*, that are perpetually worrying and devouring one another.

Oh! let those scandalous Names of Distinction be buried and forgot among us, and let our only Study be, who shall pay the greatest Honour to the *Blessed Memory* of our late Queen, by being the *Best Christian*, the most *Loyal Subject*, of the most *generous and publick Spirit* for the good of his Country, the *truest Friend*, and the *most kind and useful Neighbour*.

Then, and not till then, may we with Reason expect that God will bless our Endeavours, and settle our Affairs upon such sure and lasting Foundations, *that Peace and*
Happi-

*Happinefs, Truth and Juftice, Religion
and Piety fhall be eftablifhed among us for
all Generations.*

Which God of his Infinite Mercy accomplifh and confirm in us, for Jefus Chrift his fake; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghofl, three Perfons and one God, be all Honour and Glory, both now and for ever.
Amen.

F I N I S.

[18]

Happiness, Peace and Justice, for
all that dwell in the Kingdom of
the Living.

Which God of his infinite Mercy
and Compassion, has granted
to all his Children, who are
true and faithful, and who
are in the Kingdom of the Living.



